Improvement of runway at Silchar Airport

470. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that runway at Silchar Airport is not fit for airbus and the pilots are reluctant to land on the airport due to poor conditions; and

(b) if so, what steps Government are taking to improve/upgrade the runway at Silchar Airport?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) The existing length of runway (5850 ft) is inadequate for operations by Airbus 320 class of aircraft.

(b) There is a proposal to strengthen and extend the length of runway from 5850 feet to 7200 feet to make it suitable for Airbus 320 operations. A sum of Rs. 46.65 lakhs stands deposited with the State Government of Assam since August, 1999 for acquiring and handing over of 33 acres of land for this project.

Undue favour to licensees and double concessions to private parties

471. SHRI S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the observation made by CAG the migration package has amounted to "Undue favour to licensees and double concession" to private phone companies; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) A Draft Audit Para titled "package of concessions to existing Cellular and Basic Telephone Service Operators" was received from Director General of Audit, Post and Telecommunications.

(b) The Government have not accepted the observations made in the Draft Audit Para. A reply was sent to Audit indicating the

Government's view, *inter-alia,* that migration of the existing licensees to the New Telecom Policy-1999 (NTP-99) regime of revenue sharing arrangement was a result of informed and institutionalized decision in best public interest making pragmatic adjustments warranted by ground realities in relation to the Telecom Industry.

Defaulting private telecom companies in Andhra Pradesh

472. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposes to cancel the licenses of private telecom operators who have not paid their fees;

(b) the defaulting companies which would face the danger of cancellation;

(c) whether any such companies are operating in Andhra Pradesh;

(d) if so, the amounts owed by them; and

(e) what steps will be taken to ensure the continuity of services in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Action against the private telecom operators who have not paid their fees is to be taken in accordance with their licence condition.

(b) Extension of time has been given to all the companies, which are under migration, for payment of outstanding dues upto 15.3.2000. The names of other defaulting companies for major telecom services are given in Statement-I.(*See* below).

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As per the enclosed Statement-II. (*See* below)

(e) In case any licence is cancelled, the other service providers, wherever existing for that service, continues to provide the service.